DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 328 943 EA 022 162

AUTHOR Clark, Burton R.; Levy, Daniel C., Ed.
TITLE Reforming America's High Schools: Problems and Strategies. Proceedings of the New York Education Policy Seminar. Rockefeller Institute Conference Proceedings, Number 3.
INSTITUTION State Univ. of New York, Albany. Nelson A. Rockefeller Inst. of Government.; State Univ. of New York, Albany. School of Education.
PUB DATE 85
NOTE 39p.; Paper presented at the New York Education Policy Seminar (Albany, NY, 1984).
AVAILABLE FROM Publications, The Nelson A. Rockefeller Institute of Government, 411 State Street, Albany, NY 12203 ($3.00; quantity discounts).
PUB TYPE Viewpoints (Opinion/Position Papers, Essays, etc.) (120) -- Speeches/Conference Papers (150)

EDRS PRICE MF01 Plus Postage. PC Not Available from EDRS.
DESCRIPTORS *College Preparation; *College School Cooperation; Excellence in Education; Faculty Development; Foreign Countries; Free Enterprise System; Higher Education; High Schools; *Organizational Objectives; *Power Structure; School Restructuring; Social Structure; *Teacher Education

ABSTRACT

Inherent, interrelated, and structural biases against excellence in education that operate at the university and school levels in the American educational system are discussed in this paper. Structural constraints of the American secondary system include universal secondary education, comprehensive school organization, downward coupling, local control, and local monopoly. A limitation of higher education is its bias against teacher education. Restructuring efforts must therefore examine current institutional arrangements prior to attempting change at the individual behavioral level. An overview of Japanese education concludes that American shortcomings in secondary education are rooted in a lack of differentiation and competition. A recommendation is made to stimulate diversity through increased student tracking, comparative ranking of schools, and competition among them. Propositions for higher education include integration of teacher education into academic life and inclusion of a variety of teacher training modes. Thirty-seven notes are attached. (LMI)

****
* Reproductions supplied by EDRS are the best that can be made *
* from the original document. *
****

ED328948

The Nelson A. Rockefeller Institute of Government

Rockefeller Institute
Conference Proceedings

Reforming America's High Schools: Problems and Strategies

Burton R. Clark
University of California, Los Angeles

Proceedings of the
New York Education Policy Seminar

Edited by Daniel C. Levy
State University of New York at Albany

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
Office of Educational Research and Improvement
EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)

☑ This document has been reproduced as received from the person or organization originating it.

☐ Minor changes have been made to improve reproduction quality.

• Points of view or opinions stated in this document do not necessarily represent official OERI position or policy.

"PERMISSION TO REPRODUCE THIS MATERIAL IN MICROFICHE ONLY HAS BEEN GRANTED BY

M. Cooper

TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)."

State University of New York

Number 3
Fall 1985

EA 022 112

The Rockefeller Institute Conference Proceedings are dedicated to the wide-spread dissemination of conference proceedings and discussion compiled and edited by SUNY scholars on issues of pertinence to New York State. The opinions expressed in this paper are solely those of the author and do not represent the views of the Rockefeller Institute of Government or the State University of New York.

Burton R. Clark is Allan M. Cartter Professor of Higher Education and Sociology and Chairman of the Comparative Higher Education Research Group, University of California, Los Angeles.

Daniel C. Levy is associate professor in the Department of Educational Administration and Policy Studies, School of Education, State University of New York at Albany.

$2.00

The School of Education
State University of New York at Albany

and

The Nelson A. Rockefeller Institute of Government
State University of New York

Proceedings of the New York Education Policy Seminar

REFORMING AMERICA'S HIGH SCHOOLS: PROBLEMS AND STRATEGIES

by

Burton R. Clark
Allan M. Cartter Professor of Higher Education and Sociology,
and Chairman, Comparative Higher Education Research Group,
University of California, Los Angeles

October 1984
Albany, New York

Preface

This publication is one of a series published by the School of Education and the Rockefeller Institute of Government. The paper, discussant comments, and author's rejoinder were first presented at a School of Education/Rockefeller Institute Education Policy Seminar. The Seminar and this publication, in particular, are intended to reflect the fundamental connection that professional schools must have between the world of ideas and discovery and the interaction between the world of problems to be solved.

Excellence in research encompasses many different kinds of activity and serves many different purposes. The School of Education is committed to research that advances the power of the individual disciplines to explain, predict, and define new problems while fostering critical resistance to exaggerated or particularistic claims on their behalf. The goal is to create new knowledge while also preserving and exploring the complexities of the field.

The liveliness and creativity of research depends on the long standing tension between the urge to advance disciplinary claims as far and as rigorously as possible, and the contrary urge to subject these claims to critical scrutiny among a variety of interdisciplinary considerations. For this reason the School of Education has carefully fostered the tradition of interdisciplinary research that is responsive to the needs of both scholars and practitioners.

It is at the intersection of the disciplines and at the junction of problems of practice that schools of education must stake their reputation. In this context the objectives for the Education Policy Seminar are:

a. To provide a bridge between education as a field of study and the social and behavioral disciplines;

b. To provide an opportunity for policy makers to analyze educational problems through the lens of one or more of the social and/or behavioral disciplines; and

c. To provide a forum where the traditions of scholarly research in the pursuit of new knowledge and fuller understanding are focused on the task of enhancing the quality of life through education.

The format of each seminar includes the presentation of a paper by a leading scholar. The author is charged with examining the field of education through the lens of his or her discipline for the purpose of trying to both inform and improve educational practice. The seminar and proceedings are edited by a member of the School of Education faculty.

As mentioned previously, the Seminar is offered in cooperation with the Rockefeller Institute of Government, State University of New York. We are particularly indebted to Warren Ilchman, Director of the Institute, for his interest, cooperation and generous support of the Seminar and publication of the proceedings.

Finally, we trust the reader will find this publication stimulating and we invite and welcome comments.

Robert H. Koff,
Dean

Editor's Introductory Comments

A spate of studies, most notably the National Commission's A Nation at Risk, has recently focused an unusual degree of public attention on the plight of our schools, especially our high schools. It now appears that tandem concerns and studies are emerging regarding higher education. Only rarely, however, are salient problems of the high schools analyzed with reference to higher education. The worlds of both academia and policy-making are all too characteristically bounded by educational level.

Yet even cursory knowledge suggests that high schools and higher education are significantly interrelated. Public policies that affect one level are likely to affect the other. Moreover, policies made within higher education have a tremendous impact "downward" upon schools, just as policies made within high schools have a tremendous impact "upward" on higher education. Fortunately, the challenge of exploring the problems of American high schools has been taken up by a scholar of Burton R. Clark's background and stature. Known as one of the nation's leading analysts of higher education, Clark recently organized an influential international seminar on linkages between secondary and higher education (see The School and the University: An International Perspective, forthcoming from The University of California Press). Since then, largely by thinking through the implications of certain international practices, Clark has developed special insights into U.S. policies, the subject of the present paper.

As will become clear in the text that follows, Clark has not shied away from suggesting provocative and far-reaching alternatives for policy consideration; in this, he acknowledges the influence of Professor Charles E. Lindblom's paper presented at the previous year's School of Education/Rockefeller Institute of Government Policy Seminar (see the Rockefeller Institute Conference Proceedings, No. 2, Fall 1984, "Who Needs What Social Research for Policy Making?"). While not all readers will agree with Clark's structural prescriptions, we expect that all will find them stimulating.

Such was the case when Clark delivered this paper to us orally in October 1984. His paper sparked a lively question-and-answer period from a cross-section of interested policymakers and scholars. It also provided the backdrop for two prepared responses that moved in different but complementary directions. First, Professor Philip G. Foster, Chair of the Department of Educational Administration and Policy Studies, SUNY Albany, provided some fresh historical and sociological perspectives on comparing the U.S. and European systems. Next, Dr. Sherry Penney, SUNY Vice chancellor for Academic Programs, Policy and Planning, discussed various initiatives recently taken by SUNY to help address some of the concerns about high schools raised by Clark.

Dr. Clark is Allan M. Cartter Professor of Higher Education and Sociology, and Chairman, Comparative Higher Education Research Group, University of California-Los Angeles. Previously, he was Professor of Sociology and Chair of the Higher Education Research Group at Yale University. Properly considered the world's leading scholar of comparative higher education, Clark continually relates his international perspectives to his longer-standing expertise on U.S. higher

education. To date, Clark has authored and edited more than a dozen books, most recently The Higher Education System (1983) and Perspectives on Higher Education (1984). He has also authored some fifty articles, including such classics as "The Cooling-Our Function in Higher Education" (1960). The paper that follows is surely destined to receive the same wide reading that so many of Clark's works have to date.

Albany, New York

Daniel C. Levy
Department of Educational Administration
and Policy Studies
State University of New York at Albany

To explore the troubled state of American secondary education, let us first consider two propositions about the troubled relationship between secondary and higher education. Using "School" as a metaphor for the one level and "University" as a symbol for the other, the propositions are:

(1) the School is biased against excellence in preparing students for the University. Given its structure and agenda, the School must set its face against serving effectively as a pre-university feeder unit.

(2) the University is biased against excellence in providing teachers for the School. Given its normal inducements, the University in turn is impelled to set its face against serving effectively in selecting and training school personnel.

As these institutional biases conjoin, they cause the School and the University to relate poorly to one another. They generate a vicious circle of effects that puts the secondary level in particular on a slippery academic slope, inclined to a downward slide that is difficult to arrest. This is indeed a distinctive American educational dilemma.

The special nature of the American problem stands out vividly when we engage in comparative research, examining in various countries the flow of students through the secondary system and into higher education, and the reverse flow of teachers through higher education and into the schools.[1] Scholars normally engage in cross-national comparison in order to identify similarities and isolate differences, thereby to move toward statements that hold true for sets of countries and even universally. But we can also use such comparison as a tool for self-analysis, with other countries serving not as blueprints but as mirrors that offer different reflections on our own posture. As we rotate among these mirrors, we obtain different perceptions of the shape of our own national system, including broad contours that we overlook when we stay close to the details of educational life at home and fail to step back to gauge the primary structures and seek the differences they make.[2] As they change the way we conceptualize the educational problems of our home country, the international reflections add to the illuminating power of the more perceptive domestic studies. My comments center on characteristics of the American system. But they were generated by comparative

thinking, and I will refer in passing first to Europe and then to Japan as mirrors that give us strong reflections on a distinctive set of troublesome American features.

I will concentrate on the School, turning only briefly to the University, and concluding with implications for School reform. Throughout, I will largely ignore the many virtues of American schooling, past and present, in order to explain systematically the sources of the vices, the ingrained weaknesses that have been perceived by scholars and the public alike in recent decades. We need to identify the roots of the twin biases against excellence if we are to grasp their stubborn strength and to think effectively about how they might be changed.

The American Secondary System

A half-dozen primary features—a basic web of commitments, structures, and ideologies—together cause the American secondary system to become increasingly problematic.

(1) Universal secondary education. The first source of the problem of the American secondary system is the extent to which it has sought and achieved universal participation. The system moved beyond elite involvement a long time ago, as far back as the early decades of this century, reflecting, as Martin Trow has pointed out, an "extraordinary American commitment" to mass secondary education.[3] In the half century between 1880 and 1930, the number of students roughly doubled every decade. European systems were then extremely elite in access and participation; and, throughout the century, they continued to lag seriously behind the American evolution, moving toward universal coverage in lower secondary education only as late as the 1960s and 1970s. Even after major reforms, they have not made upper secondary education all-inclusive. In 1980, among eighteen-year-olds—the normal age for the last year of upper secondary schooling in Europe—all ten member nations of the European Economic Community averaged slightly over one-third (36 percent) still in school. In the Federal Republic of Germany, the proportion among males was 40 percent; in France, 37 percent; and in the United Kingdom, 17 percent.[4] The American system, in contrast, has pressed hard for all youth to remain in secondary school all the way through graduation. That pressure is partly ideological: school administrators labor

under a community expectation that there should not be "dropouts." It is also directly operational: since funding is based on the number of students enrolled, schools are rewarded financially by the state for keeping young people in the system.[5] Age group persistence rates have been double those of Europe: virtually all students enter the first year of high school (ninth or tenth grade, depending on local variations); and, in 1980, about three-fourths of them graduated from the secondary level.[6] In an extremely heterogeneous society, the secondary system has therefore had to cope with a vast variety of social and cultural backgrounds. It has been compelled to accommodate the deprived and the disaffected as well as the advantaged and the motivated; those for whom the secondary school is terminal as well as those bound for higher education—roughly fifty-fifty in recent years. The students who are not much enamored of schooling and who used to get out of the schoolhouse early on now persist into the eleventh and twelfth years, even mandated by some states to continue work toward the high school diploma until freed at the age of eighteen.

The excess of hope that is central to the American problem begins with the strong expectation inside and outside the system that the schools have failed if all of the age group do not persist for twelve years and graduate with one type of high school diploma. This institutionalization of American optimism stands out starkly in cross-national perspective.

(2) Comprehensive school organization. The second structural source of the American problem is the extent to which the individual school is asked to replicate the coverage of subjects and even types of students found in the system at large. Again, the basic commitments were laid down a long time ago: in the decades between 1900 and World War II, the comprehensive high school swept the field, pushing out the more specialized forms. Out went the academic school, the vocational school, and the arts school. Other than in a few instances in several major cities, they were replaced by the school that was to cover the full range of subjects and options and to include all the youths located in the assigned catchment area of a town or neighborhood. About ninety percent of all high schools are now comprehensive.

The contrast with other major systems could hardly be sharper, since in one way or another they have retained "elite" streams, generally in the form of a

secondary sector that is intensely academic, as in the gymnasium in Germany, the lycee in France, and the combination of independent schools, public grammar schools, and sixth forms in England. Even much-reformed Sweden, deeply intent on changes aimed at "comprehensivization," still retained in 1980 over twenty curricular streams within its upper "integrated" secondary schools.[7] It is the American structure that became qualitatively different, thoroughly committed to the all-inclusive school throughout the secondary system, with just three major internal tracks—the academic, the vocational, and the general—serving as minimal foci of differentiation. This type of school must operate on a wide variety of fronts, necessarily attempting to please all the people all the time. It is particularly split between serving as the sole instrument of a mass terminal system and as the sole form shouldering all the burdens of a mass preparatory system that has been stimulated by the growth, since World War II, of a system of mass higher education.

The huge hope of the system at large is thereby recapitulated in each of some sixteen thousand small worlds. Within the doors of the individual school, a substantial overload of conflicting expectations, diverging responsibilities, and proliferatory tasks becomes the critical organizational problem. The advantages of specialization, and especially of distinctiveness, are largely lost as purpose is dulled and communities of common interest dispersed.[8] As educational tasks multiply, the school that is asked to do them all finds that it is very difficult, if not impossible, to maintain a sense of mission. No amount of exhortation from on high can clarify its goals, or make possible an all-school agreement on a core curriculum, or even to allow the study of history to dominate physical education, driver education, health education, and special programs for unwed teen-age mothers. The immediate needs are legion and keep growing. Educational doctrines that might serve as formulations of purpose become stretched beyond repair. Then the unity of the school is turned over to the football and basketball teams, with heroes established accordingly.

(3) Downward coupling. The third feature of the basic structure of secondary schooling in America that undergirds the troubled nature of its latter-day performance, and especially its relationship to higher education, is its close tie to primary education. In Europe and elsewhere in the world, the main disjuncture in the educational structure became located between the elementary and secondary

levels. The elementary level was for all; the big break then occurred when the great mass of students ended their education at that point, and only the few went on to secondary schools that were pre-university in orientation and program and operated on a different plane from the lower common school. Upper secondary education became tightly coupled to the University, with the two levels webbed together in a close articulation of curricula and achievement standards and a notable interpenetration of scholastic and academic cultures.

In contrast, the early move of the American system toward universal secondary education and the replacing of specialized schools with comprehensive schools put the secondary and elementary schools on a similar plane. One was as common as the other: in historical fact, the secondary system emerged as an upward extension of the elementary level, with its genetic imprint thereby determined. It was not to be a handmaiden of higher education. Rather, it first developed as a terminal system, one that could "in its comprehensiveness and emphasis on 'education for life' simply carry further the basic education of the elementary school of which it was an outgrowth."[9] When scholars speak of "popular education" and "the common school" in America, they bracket the two levels.[10] Critically, the levels became closely linked administratively, put together within school districts that operated under a single school board, one superintendent, and a common set of central district officials. As teachers' unions developed, they further united elementary and secondary teachers: their orientations and rules, as much as those of school management, coupled the two levels. At the same time, higher education developed quite differently, away from the school districts and off under private as well as state-level sponsorships. Only the community colleges in some states became parts of school districts, and the evolution of this sector has been away from such local coupling and toward independent districts and location in state systems.

With the public secondary school linked philosophically and organizationally to the primary school, it has a built-in tendency toward "primarization." The two levels have basic curricular similarities, with the higher an extension of the lower in commitment to the transmission of a common culture. The high schools require a general course in history, rather than detailed work in history, a general course in civics, rather than specialized courses in government. In contrast to European schools, notably the French, they make little use of mathematics as a hard

requirement for all. The two levels have many similarities in "schoolteaching": in fact, even the best and most careful American observers of school personnel find it unnecessary to distinguish elementary and secondary teachers from one another.[11] There is little difference in the rewards and status of a person teaching sixth grade in a six-year elementary school and one teaching seventh grade in a two- or three-year junior high school, or between teaching in the eighth grade of an eight-year school and the ninth grade located within a four-year high school. The lay boards and administrators whose responsibilities encompass the two levels must have frames of reference that, for the secondary level, look downward rather than upward; for example, secondary school teachers who have twenty-five hours of classroom contact each week are seen as teaching less than elementary teachers who have thirty hours, rather than as teaching significantly more than instructors in higher education who are off in a different world, one where teaching loads vary from a few hours to perhaps fifteen. The coercive comparisons that operate strongly when different personnel strata are grouped within common administrative frameworks thereby pull the secondary level toward the primary school rather than toward the university. This is so natural in the American system as to be rarely thought about or questioned.

(4) Local control. Most educational systems of the world operate without the benefit of local school boards. Instead, they group public schools in national or regional frameworks that place much school administration in far-off headquarters. Such national or regional systems become intensely bureaucratic, but at the operating level they generally leave teachers free from the immediate constraints of lay supervision, even walling them off considerably from the parents of students. Professional autonomy then develops within the large administrative system, since teachers, like other major professional groups located in bureaucracies, learn to use their inside positions of power to influence the central bureaucrats into accommodating their interests. Indeed, their own kind occupy many of the bureaucratic positions. The first enemy of the professional group is the laity, not the bureaucratic staff.[12]

Operating as the most decentralized educational system in the world, American education puts secondary as well as elementary principals and teachers under the watchful eyes of nearby lay chiefs and parents who expect their voices to be heard and who have regular avenues for intervention. With much

consolidation of school districts and the growth of old unified districts in the cities, the local administrative frameworks have also become large and intensely bureaucratic. Administrative hierarchies are prominent, even notorious, with the rewards of administration raised considerably above the rewards of teaching. All this affects adversely the autonomy of teachers as a professional group, and especially their sense of self-control. The malaise of powerlessness becomes widespread. To a degree not widely recognized by Americans, the historic pattern of local control over the secondary school contributes to a deprofessionalization of school teaching.[13]

(5) Local monopoly. The American common secondary school typically has a monopoly of clientele, one based on geographic zoning. Each school district defines specific zones for individual schools. Within those assigned territories, monopolistic controls have gradually increased. When specialized public schools declined in number in various cities, they no longer drew many students from the catchments of the comprehensive schools. And since private secondary schools play only a minor role in most states and sections of the country, they, too, have been only a minor threat. As a result, parents and students have relatively little choice of schools; and schools have little reason to compete for students. The structuring of the system around thousands of small monopolies thus reduces choice, virtually eliminates academic competition among schools, and renders scholastic comparisons among schools operationally harmless. Geographic monopolization also defines the student composition of schools by the social composition of subareas within towns and cities, thereby grouping students according to the class, ethnic, religious, and racial makeup of neighborhoods. Residence becomes the key: where you live determines what you get. And when there is a high degree of residential segregation, as in the American metropolis, the common school is, socially, no longer common.

Cross-national reflections confirm what we already know from observation of the pockets in the American system that are less monopolistic in nature. Where specialized schools are available, students obviously break out of neighborhoods: art students travel off in one direction, those seeking particular types of vocational training in another, and those who are academically clever in still another. The distribution of students among schools then becomes based in part on student interest, aptitude, and prior achievement. And as some schools concentrate on

different arrays of tasks, and group students accordingly, they become places that are common on grounds of interest, aptitude, or achievement, even as they become less inclusive of curricula. There is considerable irony in the simple fact that at home and abroad a set of schools that segregate students in special clusters may well offer more educational choice than an array of comprehensive schools that possess territorial monopolies.

The comparison with American higher education could hardly be sharper. At the higher level, there is little monopolization: the many universities and colleges are enormously differentiated, most of them draw students out of a variety of neighborhoods, and they create individual mixtures of programs and clienteles. Competition is sharp. There is an abundance of student choice. The system is inordinately dynamic and capable of much self-adjustment. In contrast, the secondary system remains equipped with mainly the single institutional tool of the comprehensive school that need not attract and need not compete.

* * * * *

Universal upper secondary education, comprehensive school organization, downward coupling, local control, local monopoly—these five basic commitments and structural features of the secondary system undergird the problem of how to make this level of American education work effectively as measured by emerging international standards of academic achievement and as judged by the expectations of higher education. These commitments and structures are deeply embedded and interlocked; hence they cannot be easily altered. They may change incrementally, a bit here and a bit there, as states and school districts experiment anew with specialized schools in such forms as "magnet schools" and "theme schools," or as they firm the requirements for entry into and graduation from comprehensive schools. Universities and colleges may tighten the upward coupling of the schools, pulling them more toward the norms of higher education. Disappointed parents may turn to private schools, thereby weakening local public school monopolies and stimulating some competition. But these existing structures of work and authority are strongly resistant to major change, especially since they are intertwined with basic ideologies. Two broad beliefs play a special role in deepening the American problem: one defines student access to higher levels and the other, closely related, defines student passage within each level.

The ideal of social justice has become translated virtually everywhere into the idea of equal opportunity to enter secondary and tertiary education, but that idea is formulated and practiced in quite different ways.[14] Outside the United States, it typically means equal chances "for those who are qualified." This important modifier juts out whenever we compare European and American rhetoric about this basic aspect of educational democracy. Americans leave out the qualifier, instead offering a populist interpretation where equal means all. Everyone has a right to a secondary education; indeed, everyone is entitled to enter higher education, a right implemented especially by the spread of open-access community colleges that do not even require high school graduation. Thus, in 1980, 25 percent of the age group in France and the Federal Republic of Germany were deemed qualified to enter higher education; in the United Kingdom, only 15 percent.[15] In the United States the proportion must be seen as 100 percent or closely approaching it.

Running on a parallel course in the American system has been the norm of social promotion within the elementary and secondary schools, under which all students passed along from one grade to the next without regard to academic qualification.[16] Simply growing older is enough. In comparison, most other systems cling to the idea that students can be held back, made to repeat grades. In Europe, the sentiment seems to have remained widespread that it is better to have the large, fourteen-year-old boy who cannot do his numbers sit among smaller, younger children in lower grades, or else be sent off into a terminal vocational track, with all that that means for his identity and possible later accomplishment, than to see him promoted automatically and handed a graduation degree while still functioning at a much lower academic level. American sentiment has not been willing to pay the first price, instead opting for the second cost. Hence, American school personnel have to live down the deep embarrassment of having hundreds of thousands of young people graduate from the twelfth grade while still reading at the eighth-grade level or doing mathematics at the sixth-grade level or possessing some other such serious academic deficiency. For school administrators, that embarrassment has been the lesser of two evils: it is not politically viable for them to allow a high proportion of students to fail.[17] Standards are set accordingly. A large subset of students is kept in the comprehensive high school in undemanding programs and allowed to graduate without academic effort. The comprehensive school then truly becomes an educational parking lot, one that

additionally performs the function of keeping young people away from an already-flooded youth labor market. It is also bound to erode its own educational legitimacy, evolving toward the posture of a welfare agency, when twelve no longer means twelve but instead comes out as nine or eight or seven or some lower number of achievement years.

The coupling of automatic promotion within each level and movement from one level to the next on a universal basis automatically creates the problem of remedial education. The secondary school must spend much time and effort doing the traditionally normal work of the elementary level. In turn, certain sectors of higher education must spend much time and effort doing the traditionally normal work of the secondary school. Subcollege courses become part of the normal scheme of affairs. Community colleges cum adult centers even have students who are illiterate in two languages. The classroom college environment then resembles an elementary school instructional setting.[18]

In the American system, students coming out of secondary schools have second, third, and fourth chances in a fashion virtually unimagined in most other national systems. Those students who want to go directly to the best colleges or universities have to do things right while in the secondary school. But others do not have to get it right, and they know it. They can do it badly and still go on to higher education, a system within which they can later move from one institution to another, since transferring is possible, expected, and well-institutionalized. The large amount of opportunity and choice has many beneficial effects: preeminent is the chance for talent to rise. The college undergraduate years are a zone for grabbing-on and catching-up. But among the baleful effects, there looms large the disincentives to do well in the secondary school. One's life chances seemingly can always be improved upon later, after graduation and even long after entry into the collegiate years. Here we may note a quite specific but significant effect of open admissions: students can choose the open-ended general track in high school, which has few academic courses and many electives, instead of the more structured academic track, and still gain admission to most universities and colleges. Enrollment has shifted accordingly: between the late 1960s and the late 1970s, the percentage of students in the general track took a huge jump, from 12 to 42 percent.[19]

Finally, to come full circle, there is the price paid for extremely high expectations. The dream of universal education in the form of the popular comprehensive school that includes all students and all curricula, with no individual failures, is indeed a huge burden upon the schools. This form of democratic idealism has sustained much hard work, supporting twelve years of schooling for all in an extremely heterogeneous population and thereby contributing significantly to the integration of community and society, even as conflicts rage over racial discrimination and structured inequalities. But the perceived failure of the American school is, in considerable part, a shortfall of outcomes against expectations that the comprehensive school, operating as a local monopoly, can be helpful to all students, from all different types of backgrounds, catering in a creative fashion to their individual abilities while minimizing invidious distinctions. The shortfall simply becomes greater whenever international comparisons raise the academic part of the expectations. In the early 1980s it has been the perception, now reasonably well-grounded in fact, that the Japanese school sets a much higher standard of academic achievement. The overload of expectations is thereby increased: that the American school should, and somehow must, meet this new standard, while at the same time doing all the many other things that its ingrained nature causes it to try to do, from keeping the peace in the neighborhood, to inculcating a democratic spirit, to making all the young happy with their immediate lives.

Thus, the more that international standards of academic achievement shape American expectations, the more it can be said and will be said that the American structure of schooling is deeply and systematically biased against "excellence."

Higher Education's Impact

The bias of the University against excellence in providing teachers for the School requires only brief explanation.

American higher education is a vast congeries of some 1500 public and 1500 private institutions, extensively divided into such institutional types as research universities, service (essentially nonresearch) universities, comprehensive four- and five-year state colleges, secular and religious private liberal arts colleges, community colleges, and detached specialized schools. The location of "teacher

education" in this web of institutions is a woeful story of marginality and insecurity, one of a large, dirty Cinderella kept permanently in the corner. When this pathetic creature is allowed to come to the academic table, she huddles at the far end, way down past the salt. For the main course she gets the poorest cut of meat, if any at all, making her figuratively the first person in history to say, "Where's the beef?" She does not get any dessert. The disciplinarians at the table—from physics, biology, political science, English, history—pretend she is not there and wish she would go away.

Why? An international classification will help. Across nations, there is an elemental continuum along which teacher training varies from university embrace to university avoidance; and from normative control by the cultures of university disciplines to control by the wishes of school personnel. We can break out four types from the continuum.

(1) Close to the pole of university domination is a mode in which the education of future teachers is located primarily, even exclusively, in the major universities and is given over to the subject-matter departments, for example, economics, history, literature. Future teachers pursue the same pathways through higher education as those majoring in the individual disciplines. They come under the tutelage of professors and peers who respond to the incentives of the disciplines—their commitment to research, and certain styles thereof, and their definition of what knowledge is best and how best to go about acquiring and diffusing it. This is the mode in which the future teacher is likely to acquire the identity of a disciplinarian and to be rewarded with the relatively high academic status of being one.

Teacher education in France, the Federal Republic of Germany, and Sweden are cases of this mode. To take only Germany as an example: there the gymnasium teachers have always been trained in the universities. Inside the German university today, those who are considering a career in teaching simply participate in the programs of the subject-matter specialties and take their degrees in those fields. To be certified to teach, they then sit for national examinations. Only a minority of applicants pass, and only then do they go on to receive some practical training as probationary teachers.[20]

Throughout Europe, schoolteaching remains a popular field and retains some prestige. Its status is raised by the elevated standing of those who teach in the selective academic schools, much as the prestige of professors is enhanced by the public's perceptions of those who are located in research universities. Prestige is further enhanced by the location of teacher education within universities rather than in a separate segment that inherently has lower status. And status is enhanced still further by location within the subject-matter departments of the universities. Competitive examinations also decidedly help, particularly when only a few are chosen.

When teaching in the academic part of upper secondary education remains dignified work for "professors," or near-professors, a virtuous circle of status maintenance will continue in the relation of school and university. The preparation of teachers then seems important to the universities, a worthy task for their own agenda. In turn, as teachers flow out of prestigious faculties and departments in the universities, their preparation borrows that status and feeds it to the occupation of schoolteaching. This first mode dramatizes the point that whatever the more general sources of the status of schoolteaching in society, higher education is centrally involved in operationally upholding or diminishing that status.

(2) The second mode occurs when the preparation of teachers is embedded in the university sector but is handled somewhat autonomously in a faculty of pedagogy or a school of education. This internal differentiation pulls teacher education away from the grasp of the specific fields of knowledge, but it also leaves it in the university setting, there to be shaped by the discipline-centerness of the university structure and culture, its high valuation of research and intense specialization. The faculties of education are under steady normative pressure to adopt the research interests and commitment to specialization that are central to the "basic" disciplines. The Italian system handles teacher training in this fashion;[21] the American system has part of its teacher training in this mode.

(3) In the third type the education of secondary teachers is located in non-university institutions, generally a separate set of teachers' colleges that come under strong university influence. Here the field of education itself becomes the center of gravity in the training institution. More attention is paid to pedagogy and to adjusting teacher preparation to the character of secondary school work as

defined by school personnel and by professors whose applied interests involve them in professional practice, supervising interns and visiting the schools frequently. The college staffs are separated from the disciplinary and research imperatives of the universities; but, at the same time, they remain under heavy normative influence from system-wide standards that are set and policed primarily by university professors. The location is "non-U," but "U" norms dominate. England is an excellent case in point, where much teacher education has been located in teachers' colleges but where the university-rooted commitment to high standards includes careful control of access and close attention to curricula and student performance across all sectors.

(4) In the fourth mode, teacher training appears in a non-university sector that also possesses considerable normative autonomy from the universities. The teachers' colleges evolve from a background of close connection to the schools: the genetic imprint is that of "normal school." In the beginning their "professors" were "schoolmarms." The colleges are likely to have evolved under the tutelage of state departments of education that supervised elementary and secondary, but not higher, education. They grew up from below, rather than down from the university. Their norms and practices have been much influenced by the operational imperatives of elementary as well as secondary schooling, and the status of lower levels of education has rubbed off on them. Colleges in this mode do little or no research: no one confuses their character with that of full-bodied universities.

The United States is our strong instance. A century ago the emerging American universities and the traditional liberal arts colleges let much of the preparation of teachers slide off into normal schools which, in their own evolutionary way, became teachers' colleges and then state colleges. For a long time, as Gary Sykes has emphasized,[22] the elite universities have been only minimally involved. Many of them turned their backs, beginning at the top with such distinguished private universities as Harvard, Yale, and Princeton. Teacher education was not an elite operation; the disciplinarians found future teachers to be uninteresting as students; and teacher education, first elementary and then secondary, became someone else's business. The public universities are more involved, but less so than the state college sector. And even among the public universities, the general rule is that the higher the status of the university, the more it is inclined to lessen its involvement in teacher preparation. The state

colleges, joined by the less prestigious public and private universities and colleges, are where the work is done.[23]

The final telling point about the location of teacher education in the United States is that upwardly-mobile state colleges are bound to reduce their commitment to it. As the colleges become more comprehensive, the basic disciplines become the center of gravity within them. Then, as the comprehensive college seeks to become a university, it becomes subject to the disciplinary imperatives of research, Ph.D. production, and scholarly acclaim. Teacher education then slides toward the margin. Those professors most interested in professional practice are gradually replaced by scholars who want to do research on education but not engage in teacher training.

The bias against teacher education in American higher education has indeed become deeply rooted. No one wants it, unless it pays the bills. It has been for a long time, and it remains, the ugly Cinderella who cannot be brought out of the corner.

A Strategy of Focused Variety for High Schools

Implicit in this analysis is a sociological logic of causation: behaviors are determined by motivations, which are shaped by incentives that are built into the social and administrative organization of education. If we want to affect the behaviors of thousands of actors we should seek to change the structures that set the incentives that shape the motivations that steer those behaviors. The links between institutional structure and behavior are evident everywhere. Decentralized political systems strengthen the incentives for leadership and initiative at lower levels, while centralized ones move those incentives to central offices. Highly competitive sectors of the economy force the heads of firms to tune in closely to the price and wage actions of their direct competitors, while monopolized sectors dim such orientations and shift attention to the legitimation of monopolistic behavior. Academic tenure provides the job security that encourages professors to speak their minds even in ways that might otherwise cost them their jobs. The American research university, strongly structured around the disciplinary rewards of research and scholarship, demotivates academics from pursuing effectively the preparation of practitioners in such semiprofessions as teaching and nursing. One

major school district after another, organized in a largely bureaucratic form, sets two bottom lines for school principals: to maximize periodic attendance headcounts, since average daily attendance (ADA) is the basis for income from state budgets; and to keep derogatory information about the school out of the newspapers, since adverse publicity affects both short-run and long-run public confidence and support. Such examples are legion, of course, because modern organizational life revolves around the structuring of incentives that motivate numerous people to behave in one way or another. That is what management, statesmanship, and useful organizational theory are largely about.

The 1983-84 wave of education commission reports and national research studies have together amounted to a staggering indictment of American secondary education.[24] The high schools are seen as confused in character and irresolute in program and standards; they flatten the hopes of the best teachers, sap the energy of nearly everyone involved, and stifle public goodwill. They do not inspire, and they do not produce. The various reports then go on to make national recommendations, top-down advice to do this or do that: install a foreign language requirement for all; mandate a universal core curriculum; rebuild the curriculum around "the new basics"; return to the "three essentials" of English, mathematics, and history, and group courses in new larger units; establish rigorous and measurable standards for graduation; lengthen the school calendar; and, of course, somehow find a way to pay teachers more money and otherwise treat them better. But the reports and studies as a whole evade organizational questions.[25] What needs examining are the current institutional arrangements that preclude effective action. As long as primary structures remain static, recommendations enunciated from on-high by national commissions and broad national studies make little difference. The lesson of post-Sputnik attempts at reform in American education, after 1958, is that they did not change the basic structures of schooling. The school agenda had a momentum of its own, one that had to take on new, ever more vexing demands during the 1960s and 1970s. Appeals to school board members, administrators, teachers, university presidents and faculty to "do good," in the direction of "excellence," affected motivation and behavior for only a short time before the ongoing situational imperatives again took over.

What is to be done? Reflections from the European mirror suggest what increasing numbers of observers and participants have sensed at home: the

American secondary system can benefit from more institutional variety. Many efforts in this general direction are now underway. New York City has a number of specialized alternatives to comprehensive schools, from the Bronx High School of Science—that national peak of excellence—to schools for the performing arts, the humanities, commerce, and the health professions. Cincinnati is now a laboratory of experimentation in the use and abuse of such types of schools. San Francisco has its Lowell High School as a place that requires high grades and a special test for admission—thereby necessitating an enrollment cap on Chinese-Americans (12 percent of the city's population) so that they will not exceed 45 percent of the students! With North Carolina in the lead, whole states are even experimenting with public boarding schools that bring together outstanding students in science and mathematics. Parents and students are also more alert to private school options, thereby expressing their disappointment in the educational performance of many public comprehensive schools as well as seeking in many cases to escape from the travails of racial integration.

In their concentration on different specialties, the more specialized schools become biased toward talent development. Whatever the area—the arts are the clearest example—such schools can seek to assemble a critical mass of students who can support one another, to attract a set of teachers who have like-minded interests, and to develop a focused sense of joint enterprise between students and teachers. Some comprehensive schools are still able to build such concentrations internally, given large size, favorable finance, and good leadership. But as fields of study and subject specialties increase in number, the stretch generally becomes too great for effective assembling of multiple talents. And overall size cannot be constantly increased: the problems of order, among other limitations, soon become too great.

Diversity is pushed much further when ways are found to differentiate the comprehensive schools themselves on academic grounds, rather than solely on grounds of neighborhood. Here a brief glance in the Japanese mirror is instructive. Japanese secondary education is universal: its entry and graduation rates even exceed those of the United States. It has also moved deeply into mass higher education, with over 1,000 universities and colleges, including 500 community colleges, that vary greatly in type and selectivity. And, after World War II, following the dictates of the American Occupation, the Japanese also moved

secondary schooling into a comprehensive school framework. What then are the crucial differences?

The differences begin in a willingness to differentiate students sharply at entry to the secondary level and again at the point of entry to higher education. Schooling is uniform only until ninth grade. Up to that point, as in the American school, students are enrolled in schools strictly according to area of residence, providing "a solid base of relatively equal opportunity."[26] But the Japanese feared that if the democratic mode of similar comprehensiveness was carried further up the line, it would cause all students to sink toward the lowest common denominator. The old system that had been in place since the Meiji Restoration was premised on a selective secondary system, with some schools modeled after the severely academic German gymnasium and others furnishing several vocational tracks. Differentiation at the secondary level thus became deeply ingrained in thought and practice, so much so that when the comprehensive secondary school was forced upon the system during the Occupation, it became something quite different from the schools that the Americans intended to promote—schools that would be similar in program and quality, each with its own monopoly of clientele. Instead, the Japanese deliberately differentiated their comprehensive schools, placing them within large districts that would each include "five or more schools which are explicitly recognized as varying in quality."[27]

Comprehensiveness was thereby married to selectivity. Students had to compete for entry; the better students got first option on the specific schools they would attend. Thus, the top comprehensive schools are not comprehensive in the American sense. Possessing a cohort of top-flight students, they need offer only a college-preparatory course of study, thereby becoming an academic specialized school. And the bite of examinations at the first critical level of selection is sharp. The high school entrance exams "sort each age cohort into what amounts to an eight- to ten-tier high school ranking system."[28]

Hard selection is then repeated at the transfer point between secondary and higher education, with students from the better schools in a superior position to do well. Hence, the system's downward influence, from higher to secondary to elementary levels, is extremely strong, to the point where we can speak of the university dominating the secondary school and the secondary school dominating the

level below it. Entrance exams are a central device for this dominance. And personnel are shaped accordingly. Notably, much more than in the United States, Japanese professors write curricular materials for the schools and compose and mark entrance exams and, through employment in special schools or as private tutors, help students prepare for those exams. The secondary and postsecondary levels are stitched together in a multiplicity of ways, with the desires and standards of university personnel driving student achievement in the schools.

Notably, an upward ratcheting of standards and achievement is promoted by institutional competition. The public schools compete among themselves, scrambling to be perceived as better in order to attract better students, and guarding elite images and niches once they have been obtained. And, much more than the American, the Japanese secondary level is loaded with private school options: over 40 percent of the university-preparation enrollment is in the private sector, and many private schools develop their own special routes to particular universities. The private schools compete with, and push, the public schools.

There are no direct models here for the United States, no blueprints of correct design. American and Japanese cultures and social structures are too different in many ways. But in his excellent study of the Japanese high school, one that explicitly draws Japanese-American comparisons, Thomas P. Rohlen offers two telling observations that can help inform American thinking about broad directions of school reform:

> (1) "The merit principle and hierarchical differentiation are inseparable in public education."[29] Efforts to equate public schools are a permanent drag on achieving greater degrees of academic excellence.
>
> (2) "Progress towards social equality that cannot be integrated wit the pursuit of general excellence has no long-term viability."[30] And, we might add, judgments about excellence and viability will be increasingly formed cross-nationally, with national systems having to compete against pacesetters in achievement in schooling and work.

As seen in reflections from the Japanese mirror, the American shortfall in secondary schooling is thus rooted in a lack of differentiation, a low degree of hierarchy, and an intolerance of competition. The pivotal question then becomes: does headway in solving the problem of secondary schooling in America require fundamental, even if gradual and tentative, structure change?[31] There may possibly be no satisfactory solutions consistent with existing institutions. On grounds of comparative structure and orientation, we may say bluntly that the American system of unselective comprehensive secondary schools seeks to put equity first, social integration second, and excellence a distant third.[32] But with the long-term imperatives of competence in mind, efforts to achieve educational justice and to use the schools for social integration may well have to be worked out within a willingness to differentiate students and even to allow schools to drift into hierarchies. This means that within school districts and the secondary system at large the appropriate direction of reform may well be more rather than less streaming of students, more rather than less comparative ranking of schools, and more rather than less competition among them.

We come face to face with the need for a strategy of variety. An evolution toward a greater diversity of types of schools would also give the secondary system as a whole greater adaptability and flexibility, features characteristic of the American postsecondary system. Variety would allow more schools to carry out more focused academic tasks, thereby sharpening purpose. Indeed, the clarification of mission that virtually every national study calls for can only be realized operationally to any substantial degree by dividing purposes among different types of upper secondary schools. The proof is in the pudding of twentieth-century educational history: there is no longer any chance that the many diffused purposes—stated and unstated—of most of the urban comprehensive schools can be restated and narrowed by philosopher-statesmen in goals that drive behavior and offer the symbols of unified meaning. Specialized schools have the inherent advantage over comprehensive schools of being more coherent. It is easier for them to reap the benefits of distinctive character by means of stronger symbolic and expressive components of organization, much as do distinctive colleges in American higher education.[33] Comprehensive schools tend to become emotionally flat: specialized schools are better positioned to enrich the lives of their participants with tangible and creditable meaning.

Among the major recent domestic studies of what went wrong in American secondary schooling, Theodore R. Sizer's Horace's Compromise comes closest in emphasis to the strategy of focused variety that I am advocating. For Sizer, "the problem of American secondary education resides in its mediocre sameness rather than in fragmentation. Today we need no new consensus, but, rather, an agreement to help our adolescents break out of our existing mediocre harmonies." Sameness, he observes, is institutionalized in the comprehensive school and in the bureaucratic standardization of the larger school districts that helps to enforce similarities upon such schools and stifles initiative within them. These schools, in the main, are characterized by chronic boredom and docility among students—a condition of long standing. And how do we escape from the vicious cycle of conditions and motives that perpetuate mediocre sameness? Sizer argues effectively against national prescriptions of a core curriculum and mandated common approaches: "top-down edicts about 'what' and 'how' demonstrably do not work." Rather, greater diversity is essential for improved quality: the individual school should "retreat from the objective of 'comprehensiveness'"; there should be "a variety of school settings (separate schools or schools-within-schools)," rooted in a decentralization of power from central headquarters to many individual schools. And if such schools should fall into a hierarchy of prestige, then so be it: "A schools" in an urban or state system could be given wide latitude, "B schools" could be more regularly checked, and "C schools" administered centrally.

Sizer concludes on the theme of structure: "better schools will come when better structures are built [that] provide apt and nurturing conditions that will attract students and teachers and make their work together worthwhile and efficient." The conditions that provide the right incentives, he notes in passing, are found most frequently in "academically oriented 'magnet' schools in the public sector and in independent schools."[34] Concentrating on the interiors of schools and classrooms, Sizer stops only a step short of advocating a general differentiation of schools into various specialized and comprehensive types that would extend teacher and student choice as they strived individually and quasi-independently to develop unique organizational character.

Among the national studies and reports that argue in the opposite direction, for mandated sameness, some offer a glimmer of recognition that the last two years of secondary education would profit from a greater variety of settings and

programs. After pushing mightily for his own vision of common core requirements, Ernest L. Boyer moves to a secondary advocacy of "elective clusters" and "specialty schools."[35] Similarly, John Goodlad—in the most thorough and far-reaching of all the 1983-84 reports—argues for the strengthening of common schooling from kindergarten through grade twelve, but then goes on to praise "key schools," "magnet schools," and "demonstration schools"—for which "the concept of choice is critical"—for their role in "providing exemplary models."[36] The spread of such schools clearly would mean more competition and more institutional hierarchy.

Differentiation rather than unification thus becomes the nearest thing to a single key in reform. Institutional variety notably permits centers of excellence that restore some prestige to schoolteaching, providing jobs for teachers whose subject-matter expertise orients them toward colleagues in higher education. Some secondary teachers thereby become uncommon, doing work, as elsewhere in the world, that merits much respect from those in higher education, top government circles, and the general public. The schools and teachers that have enhanced prestige exert some standard-raising leverage on the attitudes and motivations of the schools and teachers who are not so blessed.

There are many things wrong about the differentiation of secondary systems into elite and nonelite, noble and less noble, with the majority of schools, teachers, and students laboring on the dark side of the invidious comparison. The lowest of the low become dumping grounds. But the benefits of retaining high prestige for a leading segment of the secondary system stand out in stark relief when we contemplate the long, well-ingrained decline in the prestige of schoolteaching in that system of the world—the American—in which specialized academic schools have been most completely eliminated. High prestige recruits talent; it aids professionalization. Its loss is a major blow to the entire secondary system.

A strategy of variety that is realistic in American education during the rest of the century needs to meet two tests. First, it must allow for the retention of comprehensive schools that have managed to create a strong sense of purpose and related respectable intellectual standards. The country surely has thousands of such survivors from the common-school era and effort. Second, it must involve a differentiation of students among comprehensive and noncomprehensive schools that does not bring in its wake more racial segregation and social inequality than now

exists under the comprehensive school monopoly. This latter standard should not be difficult to meet, since the student composition of the comprehensive schools of the major metropolitan areas, where the American problem is centered, is so fully determined by the relatively fixed class and race differences of the neighborhoods of residence. Specialized schools that are formed with an eye on social composition can mix students from different backgrounds better than schools, in so many locales, that depend on the residence criterion alone. Imagination about variety also would permit more students to attend comprehensive and specialized schools simultaneously, as in a pattern in which artistically motivated students attend a comprehensive school in the morning and a school for the performing arts in the afternoon, or attend each on different days of the week or month. Such combinations can readily claim to be more rather than less "democratic," on grounds of freedom and choice, than the comprehensive school that does not allow for a robust form of grouping students along lines of interest and motivation.

American higher education, as well as the Japanese secondary system, teaches that public educational institutions do not have to be formed as monopolies, that they can compete sharply with one another in ways that enhance the viability of the whole. These two points of comparison together indicate that institutional hierarchies have their good points in assigning recognition to perceived excellence and thereby motivating thousands of semiautonomous professionals to levels of effort and achievement that bureaucratic controls cannot induce. While reformers tinker with such changes as requiring four years of English instead of three, a course or two in the mastery of computers, and tests of functional literacy for high school graduation, Americans can readily explore further whether noncompetitive and nonranked comprehensive high schools should be pushed toward some competition, ranking, and specialization. How much such features should and can invade the secondary level remains to be explored in a highly experimental fashion, with a zig here and a zag there, pulling back on errors, pressing ahead imitatively on apparent successes—a style of change appropriate indeed to decentralized initiative in a huge federal country. The point is that the existing institutional order needs to be challenged and stimulated. The "common school" alone can no longer carry the burden. It needs help.

Times change: the environment evolves and no organizational tool is necessarily right forever. A swing <u>from</u> specialized schools <u>to</u> comprehensive ones

is right at certain times, in certain places. European systems have been attempting recently to negotiate this transition, particularly to reduce the privilege associated with the traditional classical and scientific schools. But an evolution that inserts more specialized schools in a system dominated by a comprehensive form is, at another time, also right. There is increasingly no one best way. Variety and experimentation are particularly necessary in the national system, the American, that has most completely gone down the comprehensive path.

All this is difficult enough. But the bias of American higher education against the preparation of teachers may prove even more difficult to lessen significantly. It will require much experimentation, university by university, college by college, to find realistic ways of altering the incentives of academic departments and the rewards of disciplinary specialization so as to bring the recruitment and training of teachers more fully into the academic life. Top universities need to find ways to institutionalize an all-campus commitment, to pull teacher education from the periphery to the center. But it is not at all clear how this will be done, especially since schoolteaching as a whole will continue to be a relatively poorly paid, low status occupation staffed by academically less able people, and professors in the research universities will not want to be associated with it. Special programs will need to be devised, with ideals restructured and leadership provided, providing a sense of mission and enhanced status.[37] We will need to move toward a strategy of variety in modes of teacher training and retraining. For example, there is some indication that leading private universities, as in the case of Yale, may find it more possible to pull faculty members from various disciplines into a program of upgrading teachers already at work in nearby school systems than to mount an effective effort to train more than a handful of young people to enter the schools. We should expect different segments of higher education, at best, to relate effectively to different types of teacher training for different types of schools. For example, professors in particular disciplines are likely to find specialized secondary schools in similar fields more interesting than the unfocused high school, hence they will be more willing to link themselves to such schools and to recruit and to train for them.

In conclusion: my analysis of "what went wrong in America" in the relation of the School and the University has been full of strong evaluations. Hence it is appropriate to end on the note that modern social science should tell us something

about the realization of virtue in everyday life. Embedded in my analysis is the view that virtues are rooted in institutions—hence, that to advocate certain virtues in education requires that we first understand how they are enhanced or diminished by the underlying institutional framework. This institutional approach also maintains that nothing comes cheap: that—to follow the economists—all benefits have costs; that—to echo Sophocles—the truly tragic conflict is the conflict of the good with the good. Each national educational system has its own special clash of virtues, inexorable conflicts among much-desired, but diverse, human values. The biases against excellence that I have highlighted are ingrained in the American system because they have served other purposes of the School and the University. The seeking of a higher level of competence in the preparation of students bound for higher education, and in the preparation of teachers headed for the secondary school, runs squarely up against the good contained in other purposes that are part of a long-term organic development. The system has long made its own fundamental compromises and has deeply institutionalized them. To increase the yield of certain values and particular virtues is to insure that we will diminish others. American optimism cannot wish away the irreconcilability of the ever-growing number of major values—justice, competence, liberty, community, racial integration, personality development, and on and on—that we seek to realize in education. The pendulum of public concern swings first in one direction and then in another, precisely because efforts to achieve more in one direction bring the disappointment of less achievement in the pursuit of other goals, and that disappointment propels us off in another direction.

Especially in large nations, the educational subsystems that best effect tolerable compromises are those that differentiate tasks among a variety of organizational tools. The ones least well-equipped to face a changing environment and an ever more burdensome load of expectations and tasks are those that remain centered on a single institutional form. To the extent that American upper secondary education remains cast only in the form of the public comprehensive school, so will the dilemmas of secondary schooling intensify. The way to overcome blockage is to follow a strategy of variety.

Notes

1 See Burton R. Clark (Ed.), The School and the University: An International Perspective (University of California Press, forthcoming). This volume, incorporating papers originally prepared for a 1983 summer conference, examines many aspects of the relation between secondary and higher education, including the examination system, in France, the Federal Republic of Germany, England and Wales, Sweden, Japan, the People's Republic of China, Latin America, Anglophonic Africa, and the United States. The present paper, focused on the flow of students in the one direction and the flow of teachers in the other, draws upon my concluding chapter in this volume. The conference and edited volume were supported by a grant from the Exxon Education Foundation. Further research on this topic in the UCLA Comparative Higher Education Research Group is now underway under a grant from the Lilly Endowment.

2 In an outstanding analysis of strategies in comparative politics, Mattei Dogan and Dominique Pelassy point to the value of "comparing to escape from ethnocentrism" as well as of "comparing to find sociological rules." Comparison, they note, is more than a quest for information. It is also a quest for enlightenment, and thus it is one of the most fruitful ways of thinking. It helps to rid us of inherited fossilized notions, obliges us to reconsider the validity of undiscussed interpretations, and enlarges our visual field." Mattei Dogan and Dominique Pelassy, How to Compare Nations: Strategies in Comparative Politics. Chatham, NJ: Chatham House Publishers, 1984. Especially pp. 3-11; quotation, p. 9.

3 "By 1910, there were over 1,100,000 high school students, nearly 90 percent of them enrolled in the over 10,000 public high schools, and they comprised about 15 percent of the 14-17 year age groups." The latter proportion was to rise steadily, reaching 90 percent by 1957. Martin A. Trow, "The Second Transformation of American Secondary Education," The International Journal of Comparative Sociology, 11 (Sept. 1961), 144-166. Quotation, p. 146.

4 Guy Neave, "France," in Burton R. Clark (Ed.), The School and the University.

5 Carol Stocking, "The United States," in Burton R. Clark (Ed.), The School and the University.

6 Ibid.

7 Lars Ekholm, "Sweden," in Burton R. Clark (Ed.), The School and the University.

8 On the importance of distinctiveness in the character of organizations generally, see the classic statement by Philip Selznick, Leadership in Administration. Evanston, IL: Row, Peterson, 1957. A relevant study in education is Burton R. Clark, The Distinctive College: Antioch, Reed & Swarthmore. Chicago: Aldine, 1970. The literature in organizational theory has exploded in recent years with concern about the cultural side of organization, including the role of "organizational character" and "organizational distinctiveness." See, for example, Thomas J. Peters and Robert H. Waterman, Jr., In Search of Excellence: Lessons from America's Best-Run Companies. New York: Harper and Row, 1983.

9 Martin A. Troy, op. cit., p. 165.

10 As in Lawrence A. Cremin, The Genius of American Education. New York: Vintage Books, 1965.

11 As in the classic study by Dan C. Lortie, Schoolteacher: A Sociological Study. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1975.

12 For a cross-national analysis of educational values and interests that stresses the professional-laity distinction, see Gary Rhoades, "Conflicting Interests in Higher Education," American Journal of Education, 91, May 1983, pp. 283-327.

13 For an outstanding recent analysis of the failure of professionalization in schoolteaching in America, see Gary Sykes, "Teacher Education in the United States," in Burton R. Clark (Ed.), The School and the University.

14 See Burton R. Clark, The Higher Education System: Academic Organization in Cross-National Perspective. Berkeley, Los Angeles, London: University of California Press, 1983. Chapter 7, "Values."

15 Guy Neave, op. cit.

16 Under social promotion policies, students are advanced in response to their social needs—particularly the need to remain with their own age group—rather than in response to their proven ability . . . social promotion tends to place achievement at a lower priority than such concerns as social adjustment and continuous progress. . . . [it] perceives students of the same age as having relatively uniform capacities for learning." David F. Labaree, "Setting the Standard: Alternative Policies for Student Promotion," Harvard Educational Review, 54 (February 1984), 67-87. Quotations from pp. 67, 86.

17 Carol Stocking, op. cit.

18 On literacy training in community colleges, see Richard C. Richardson, Jr., Elizabeth C. Fisk, and Morris A. Okun, Literacy in the Open-Access College. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 1983, especially the close description of "basic language skills courses," pp. 57-62.

19 Ernest L. Boyer, High School: A Report on Secondary Education in America. New York: Harper & Row, 1983. p. 79.

20 Ulrich Teichler, "The Federal Republic of Germany," in Burton R. Clark (Ed.), The School and the University.

21 Burton R. Clark, Academic Power in Italy: Bureaucracy and Oligarchy in a National University System. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1977. pp. 27-32.

22 Gary Sykes, op. cit.

23 "Sixty-five percent of the teacher training institutions are private, but they turn out less than 25 percent of the new teachers. A small set of public master's and doctoral level institutions account, respectively, for 42 and 28 percent of the education graduates." Gary Sykes, op. cit., p. 458.

24 See, in particular: The National Commission on Excellence in Education, A Nation at Risk: The Imperative for Educational Reform. Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1983; The Task Force on Education for Economic Growth, Action for Excellence: A Comprehensive Plan to Improve Our Nation's Schools. Denver: Education Commission of the States, 1983; The College Entrance Examination Board, Academic Preparation for College: What Students Need to Know and Be Able to Do. New York: 1983; The Twentieth Century Fund, Making the Grade: Report of the Twentieth Century Fund Task Force on Federal Elementary and Secondary Policy. New York: 1983; Ernest L. Boyer, op. cit.; John I. Goodlad, A Place Called School. New York: McGraw-Hill, 1983; Theodore R. Sizer, Horace's Compromise: The Dilemma of the American High School. Boston: Houghton Mifflin Co., 1984.

25 For an excellent analysis of the reports along these lines, see Paul E. Peterson, "Did the Education Commissions Say Anything?" The Brookings Review, Winter, 1983, pp. 3-11.

26 Thomas P. Rohlen, Japan's High Schools. Berkeley, Los Angeles, London: University of California Press, 1983. p. 307. See also William K. Cummings, Education and Equality in Japan. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1980.

27 William K. Cummings, "Japan," in Burton R. Clark (Ed.), The School and the University, pp. 255-256.

28 Thomas P. Rohlen, Japan's High Schools, p. 308.

29 Ibid, p. 313.

30 Ibid, p. 326

31 Charles E. Lindblom has raised the issue for policy analysis generally of whether intentions to effect drastic institutional reform—root and branch—can be coupled with gradual, incremental implementation. Charles E. Lindblom, "Who Needs What Social Research for Policy Making?" Rockefeller Lecture, State University of New York, Albany, October 1983.

32 See the conclusion of Philip A. Cusick that "the dominating element" in the American high school is its "obligation to the egalitarian ideal." Some teachers may have preferred a different system, stronger on merit, but they have "accepted the social burden of 'having to take everybody and keep them all happy.'" Philip A. Cusick, The Egalitarian Ideal and the American High School. New York: Longman, 1983. pp. 106, 116. Martin Trow noted cogently over twenty years ago that "it is in the schools that the American value of equality is most deeply rooted," that the schools try hard to avoid the invidious distinctions that inhere in the matching of the more academically able students with the more able teachers. Martin Trow, op. cit., p. 161.

33 Burton R. Clark, "The Organizational Saga in Higher Education," Administrative Science Quarterly, 17 (1972): pp. 178-183.

34 Theodore R. Sizer, op. cit., pp. 6, 132, 137, 216, 196, 217, 198, respectively.

35 Ernest L. Boyer, op. cit., pp. 128-130.

36 John Goodlad, op. cit., pp. 299-301.

37 Gary Sykes, op. cit.

For a complete list of Rockefeller Institute publications contact:

Marketing and Public Relations Department
Rockefeller Institute of Government
411 State Street
Albany, New York 12203
(518) 472-1300

Nelson A. Rockefeller Institute of Government
State University of New York
411 State Street
Albany, New York 12203
(518) 472-1300